

How much TV is unhealthy for my children?

Watching TV can be a source of education and entertainment for children and their parents alike. However, too much screen time can have unhealthy results. Parents are encouraged to monitor and limit the amount of time their children and the family watch TV. It's recommended that instead of turning on the tube, that parents look to activities such as reading, board games, puzzles, and sports. Time in front of the TV can easily become addictive for children and can impede their ability to achieve other tasks such as completing their homework or chores. Parents should implement household rules regarding the amount of TV that can be watched during the week. Remember, determining and talking about the rules is only half the battle; following through with them is the real challenge.

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in knowing what their children are watching on TV. It's beneficial for caretakers to review programs and movies beforehand to determine whether the material is age appropriate and aligned with family values. If this is not feasible, at least watch the first few minutes and check-in periodically. Parents should think about blocking programs that contain adult material so that their children don't have access to them. Some programs have screening tools that assist with this process and can be found in your TV guide or flash on the screen before the program begins. The possibilities without the TV are endless, so try something new, turn off the TV and enjoy quality time with the family.